

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

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Am 1. (Currently Amended) A substrate processing apparatus for providing ~~predetermined~~ processing to substrates brought into the apparatus from a load port door of the apparatus, comprising:

a load port table on which a wafer carrier that accommodates a plurality of said substrates at the front of said load port door[~~], and~~];

a shield plate provided so as to surround said load port table; and

a shield door that can be opened or closed provided on said shield plate.

2. (Original) The substrate processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said wafer carrier is brought in and out of said load port table by a conveyer means, and said conveyer means brings said wafer carrier in and out of said load port table by ascending and descending said wafer carrier within a region surrounded by said shield plate.

3. (Currently Amended) The substrate processing apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising:

~~a door that can be opened or closed provided on said shield plate, and~~

~~a lock mechanism for holding said shield door in a closed state, wherein said shield door is maintained in the closed state thereof by making said lock mechanism function when said wafer carrier is brought in and out of said load port table by said conveyer means.~~

4. (Currently Amended) The substrate processing apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said shield door is maintained in the closed state thereof when said wafer carrier brought from another processing apparatus arrives above said load port table.

5. (Currently Amended) A substrate processing system having a plurality of substrate processing apparatuses for providing ~~predetermined~~ processing to substrates brought into the

apparatuses from a load port door of the respective apparatuses, the apparatuses connected through conveyer means, wherein: each of said substrate processing apparatuses comprises:

a load port table on which a wafer carrier that accommodates a plurality of said substrates at the front of said load port door[[,]]; and

a shield plate provided so as to surround said load port table[[,]]; and

A<sub>3</sub> a shield door that can be opened or closed provided on said shield plate, and

wherein said shield door of a specified substrate processing apparatus is maintained in the closed state thereof at the time when said substrate processing apparatus to which said wafer carrier is conveyed is specified.

6. (Currently Amended) A substrate processing system having a plurality of substrate processing apparatuses for providing ~~predetermined~~ processing to substrates brought into the apparatuses from a load port door of the respective apparatuses, the apparatuses connected through conveyer means, wherein: each of said substrate processing apparatuses comprises:

a load port table on which a wafer carrier that accommodates a plurality of said substrates at the front of said load port door[[,]]; and

a shield plate provided so as to surround said load port table[[,]]; and

a shield door that can be opened or closed provided on said shield plate, and

wherein said shield door of a specified substrate processing apparatus is maintained in the closed state thereof at the time when said wafer carrier conveyed by said conveyer means arrives above said load port table of said specified substrate processing apparatus.

7. (Currently Amended) A method for conveying substrates utilizing a substrate processing system, ~~wherein~~ the processing system including a plurality of substrate processing apparatuses each having a load port table surrounded by a shield plate comprising a shield door that can be opened or closed, the apparatuses connected through conveyer means, [[and]] the method comprising:

causing a wafer carrier that accommodates a plurality of substrates [[is]] to be ascended or descended to bring said wafer carrier to or out of said load port table of each substrate processing apparatus, wherein: said shield door is maintained in the closed state thereof when said wafer carrier is brought in or out of said load port table using said conveyer means.

A3 8. (Currently Amended) The method for conveying substrates according to claim 7, wherein said shield door is maintained in the closed state thereof at the time when said substrate processing apparatus to which said wafer carrier is conveyed is specified.

9. (Currently Amended) The method for conveying substrates according to claim 7, wherein said shield door is maintained in the closed state thereof at the time when said wafer carrier conveyed by said conveyer means arrives above said load port table of a specified substrate processing apparatus.

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